

where there is terrorism problems. Many terrorist groups who operate in the Middle East have training camps and operate around Khartoum.

Where the problem of hunger is growing, Egypt and other friendly countries like that who are friends of the United States should be urged to be engaged and be involved to help bring about the peace, as should our allies in Europe.

□ 1430

I also believe it is important for the United States to support systems of local governance and sustenance in southern Sudan. Operation Lifeline of Sudan, which has cost billions, is subject to the control of the government of Sudan and it is manipulated by the Khartoum government to suit its objectives. The government claims that its territorial integrity is violated by foreign NGOs in the south trying to help the people it claims as citizens. And until the fighting actually ends and there is peace, the United States should strongly support the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement.

In conclusion, from what I saw on the trip, I believe the Bush administration and the Congress, working together, have a unique opportunity to make a real difference in Africa and in Sudan, and now is the time to seize it.

I was pleased to learn that the African bureau was the first section area our new Secretary of State Colin Powell visited at the State Department. That is a small step, but it was an extremely positive one. I am also pleased that Secretary Powell addressed Africa during his confirmation hearings.

Africa and the world is watching. We can provide hope and opportunity to these people who have suffered so much, particularly in southern Sudan and in central Africa. The figures are hard to comprehend, but more than 4 million people, more than 4 million, a population larger than some of our largest cities, have died in Sudan and in the Congo. Four million. The number is staggering and the number is increasing. With more weapons being purchased, it is increasing more. With more child soldiers running rampant through the Congo and Sudan it is increasing more.

We cannot, we in the Congress and those in the Bush administration, cannot allow the suffering to continue without trying, without making an effort. The Bush administration has a unique opportunity to make a difference in Africa.

Throughout my trip, the constant refrain I heard was that the United States just needed to show that it cared. No one, no one asked for American troops to be deployed. No one needs, supports, believes that American soldiers have to be involved in any way. They just want America to use its efforts, and they want America to send a signal that it will begin to focus on

the plight of Africa before another generation of young people is lost to civil war, famine, disease, and AIDS.

America has a rich history of reaching out to bring peace and stability and reconciliation to communities around the world. We have made a difference in northern Ireland, we have made a difference in Eastern Europe, we have made a difference in so many places. We are attempting to bring peace to the Middle East. It is now time to focus on Africa, to focus on the Congo and to focus on the Sudan to end the killing.

IN OPPOSITION TO CONFIRMATION OF SENATOR ASHCROFT FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIRK). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, it gives me, I want to say great pleasure; but I do not know if it is great pleasure that I have as I stand here this afternoon. I stand here and hope to be joined by a number of my colleagues in opposition to the confirmation of Senator John Ashcroft for Attorney General. This special order today will be dedicated to opposing that confirmation.

In the wake of the election calamity in Florida, we find ourselves forced into yet another battle to defend the tenets of our Constitution, equal protection and fairness for all. This unfortunate situation arises only a few weeks after the President-elect promised to be a uniter, not a divider; to be the President of all Americans, not just the minority who voted for him. Sadly, the nomination of John Ashcroft to be this Nation's Attorney General makes those words ring hollow.

If President Bush truly wishes to unite this country, his selection of John Ashcroft is a puzzling one. If, on the other hand, his goal is to appease a small minority of Americans who view the principles of equal protection and fairness for all Americans with disdain, he could find no better candidate for Attorney General than John Ashcroft.

The Ashcroft nomination does nothing to move this country towards much-needed healing. In fact, Senator Ashcroft has openly rejected those members of his own party who speak of conciliation and compromise and has fanatically urged the encroachment of conservatism. Senator Ashcroft's public record exhibits an open hostility to the very laws and policies that protect the civil rights of all individuals in our society. More importantly, Senator Ashcroft has revealed a troubling lack of integrity in his attempts to use the power entrusted to him by Missouri voters to force his personal agenda into public policy and law by whatever

means necessary, including personal attacks and distortions of truth.

Sadly, he has extended his proclivity for mischaracterization into his Senate confirmation hearings, where he blatantly distorted his own record and history in hopes of convincing this Senate that the partisan zealot we have come to know has become a rational, fair, public servant. We should not be fooled.

There are a number of reasons to oppose Senator Ashcroft, but his appalling record on civil rights alone makes him unqualified for this job. No one would entrust their home to a caretaker who has made repeated attempts to burn it to the ground. Similarly, it makes no sense to place our civil rights laws in the hands of a man who has shown an outright hostility to the very notion of civil rights for all.

For example, Senator Ashcroft voted against the Hate Crimes Prevention Act and opposes any form of affirmative action. He eagerly accepted an honorary degree from Bob Jones University, vigorously opposed the gathering of racial profiling statistics, and aggressively fought school desegregation ordered by the Federal courts in Missouri. Senator Ashcroft also praised Southern Partisan Magazine, which has been called neosegregationist, and called Confederate soldiers patriots.

Many of Senator Ashcroft's supporters, in an attempt to sweep this abysmal record under the rug, insist that he should be judged not on his veracity and record but solely on his character. However, even if we were to disregard this other extensive evidence of his unfitness and limit our decision to his character, he badly fails the test as well. For example, in the Senate Committee on the Judiciary earlier this month, Mr. Ashcroft repeatedly and blatantly misrepresented or evaded the facts of his own record. He wants this job so badly that he is willing to misstate the truth in order to obtain it.

Senator Ashcroft's willingness to jettison honesty and integrity to achieve his political ends is nothing new. As a member of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, he was well known for viciously attacking candidates whose political views did not agree with his extremist ideas. He opposed the confirmation of two highly qualified attorneys, Marsha Berzon and Richard Paez to the Federal Courts of Appeals. The most recent offense was his dishonest and cynical campaign against a Federal judicial nomination of a highly qualified African-American Supreme Court Judge, Ronnie White. He demonstrated a disturbing lack of integrity by distorting the truth and misleading the press and his colleagues in the Senate in order to sabotage White's nomination to a Federal District Court.

His history and past behavior of twisting facts and law to conform to

his own narrow political views further reveals his unfitness to serve as this country's top law enforcement official. My legal experience as a judge and prosecutor taught me that the law is often not clearly defined and in such cases must be interpreted by the person enforcing it. That is why I am so concerned about Senator Ashcroft's nomination. He said over and over again, in the Senate confirmation hearings, that he would be willing to enforce the law when the law was clear and convincing. What I am worried about is what happens when the law is not clear and convincing.

As the Attorney General, Senator Ashcroft would be vested with significant discretion, having oversight over U.S. attorneys throughout these United States. And throughout these United States, they are required to follow the policy of the Attorney General. Let me just give an example. When Janet Reno served as Attorney General, one of the programs she had in place was Trigger Lock. The purpose of Trigger Lock was to enforce certain penalties against those who carried guns. This was a policy that passed throughout the United States.

What I worry about is, should Senator Ashcroft become the Attorney General, what policies he will put in place that will pass throughout the country. What policies will he put in place that might inhibit someone because of their sexual preference; that might inhibit someone because of their religion; that might inhibit someone because of their race; that might inhibit someone as a result of their choice to speak on a particular issue.

Now, when the law is clear, perhaps he will follow the law because he knows a billion people will be watching him. But all prosecutors, all attorneys general are permitted to make decisions that will never see the light of day, and those decisions are the ones we are concerned about, where he is vested with discretion, based on his past experience and his past service as not only a governor, as an Attorney General, but also as a Senator. That is why we are worried. Based on his extensive record, I have no confidence that Mr. Ashcroft is capable of interpreting our Nation's laws in a way that furthers the best interests of the American people rather than his own ideology.

The Attorney General must have the trust of the American people. Clearly, he does not. Recently, an unprecedented nationwide campaign of coalitions, representing over 200 national organizations, launched the Stop Ashcroft Crusade. Not surprisingly, many of Mr. Ashcroft's supporters have attempted to vilify this coalition by incorrectly characterizing it as an assembly of marginal left-leaning interest groups. However, this coalition represents a broad base of American citi-

zens and wide-ranging mainstream issues, including civil and human rights, the environment, women's rights and choice, gun control, workplace concerns and religious freedom, and cannot be dismissed so cavalierly.

□ 1445

The depth and breadth of opposition to Mr. Ashcroft is best exemplified by those who know him best, his own constituency in his home State of Missouri, who overwhelmingly voted for a deceased candidate rather than endure another 6 years with him as Senator.

The grim truth is that the record of Senator Ashcroft is not only anti-ethical to the necessary virtues of an effective U.S. Attorney General, it also demonstrates values and belief in direct conflict with the purported philosophy of President Bush.

Mr. Ashcroft is a divider, not a uniter, and by President Bush's own definition, is unqualified to serve as this Nation's Attorney General. For this reason, I pray that my colleagues in the Senate will show a commitment to true bipartisanship and show a commitment to the people of these United States and politely and firmly show Mr. Ashcroft the door.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIRK). If the gentlewoman will suspend, the Chair would gently remind all Members not to characterize or advise the other body on their decision, under the tradition of comity.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Would the Speaker repeat that for me, please.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would urge all Members not to advise the other body as to how they should vote under the rule seeking to establish comity and continued cooperation with the other body.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield to my colleague the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me and I want to thank her for her leadership in bringing this special order to the floor on this special day when Mr. Ashcroft is indeed before the Senate and in the nomination that the President has put.

I want to speak to the standard that should be used in deciding whether a nominee for Attorney General should be approved. I think it is only fair to use the same standard that Mr. Ashcroft used, because I believe if we use that standard, then it would be necessary to follow him in voting against a presidential choice.

This is what Mr. Ashcroft himself said. I am quoting from the transcript of proceedings in the nomination of Bill Lee for Assistant Attorney General of the United States, and here is what Mr. Ashcroft himself said: "He has, obviously, the incredibly strong

capacities to be an advocate, but I think his pursuit of specific objectives that are important to him limit his capacity to have the balanced view of making the judgments that will be necessary for the person who runs that division."

If this is the standard, Mr. Speaker, if the standard set by Mr. Ashcroft is to be followed, incredibly strong capacities to be an advocate, this is the man with the strongest capacity to be an advocate on the issues he espouses, the issues that are at issue in the United States Senate, then you need somebody, he says, with a more balanced view. Or again, reading from Mr. Ashcroft's own words again in the Bill Lee proceedings: "I don't think that this is an issue that really is an issue about the appointments of the President. I think this is an issue about the job that should be filled."

So Mr. Ashcroft wants us to look at the job that should be filled. So I want to look at the job that should be filled. The job that would be filled is Attorney General of the United States. To fill that job, one has, it seems to me, to meet not only substantive standards such as qualifications, but the appearance to be able to do fairness. After all, they are the chief prosecutor and they have got to somehow create the appearance that, in choosing who to prosecute, in choosing what to pursue, they have done so on a fair basis.

In other words, all of the talk about Mr. Ashcroft's qualifications as a lawyer I concede. Because being Attorney General of the United States is not only about whether they can do it, but whether they give the apparent appearance of fairness in doing it.

Or, as Mr. Ashcroft said, this is an issue about the job to be filled. The job to be filled here is not simply just the kind of job that my students at Georgetown University Law School, when they go to a law firm, have to fill. That is how they qualify to go to a job when they are among the best and brightest students, as they are, in the country. To be Attorney General of the United States, there is another very important ingredient, and that is, can they be fair in doing it and have they led their life so that people will believe that they are being fair in doing it.

I believe it is not appropriate to oppose a nominee because one disagrees with him. If that were the case, then I would have to oppose any senator probably in the United States Senate who was up for Attorney General.

The reason that I think it fair to oppose Mr. Ashcroft is that he is on the fringes of advocacy on issues that are central to his jurisdiction as Attorney General of the United States, he is on the fringes of advocacy of civil rights, he is on the fringes of advocacy of the rights of gays, he is on the fringes of advocacy of the rights of women to reproductive freedom.

It is not that we oppose him. It is that he has set himself so far on the edge of advocacy that he has created doubts and serious doubts about his ability to fill the position for which he has been nominated, and that is the standard he has set and that is the standard that the Senate itself says should be set.

It is that standard that Mr. Ashcroft has not met. He has not met that standard when it came to the way he opposed a voluntary plan for integration in a State that had a long history of segregation. He has not followed that standard when it came to the way he opposed reproductive freedom for women, going well beyond the standard that we use even in this House when wanting to bar, outlaw the procedure altogether under any and all circumstances.

What woman can be for that? Well, I tell you this much. Most women in the United States oppose that. He has not met that standard when it comes to his fairness in judging the qualifications of others, such as Judge Ronnie White.

Having not met that standard, the standard he himself set, I do not see how others should be called upon to hold him to a lesser standard. I think this is an issue about the job, as Senator Ashcroft said when judging whether Bill Lan Lee should become Assistant Attorney General for civil rights. I think this is about the job even more so because this is about the job of Attorney General of the United States.

On that score, I can say, having looked to the standard he set, the standard that I believe is being used in the Senate of the United States as I speak, that John Ashcroft does not meet the qualifications to be Attorney General of the United States.

I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 5 minutes to my colleague, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY).

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus today to voice my deep concerns regarding the nomination of John Ashcroft for Attorney General of the United States.

I want to also commend my colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) for her leadership with the CBC Task Force on this nomination and for scheduling this special order.

Mr. Speaker, our Constitution states that the President has the right to nominate individuals whom he chooses to be in his cabinet. Likewise, the Senate has the right and duty to advise and consent on those nominations as it sees fit.

But I am a Congressman from Missouri, a place known as the "show me" State, and I am not easily convinced. I will wait to see which John Ashcroft

shows up as Attorney General, the John Ashcroft who appeared at the confirmation hearing, or the one who I served with in Missouri State government. Because those are two very different men.

Evidently, former Senator Ashcroft has had a sudden epiphany, one which miraculously coincided with his confirmation hearing. He has apparently undergone a great conversion on a wide range of issues that he has consistently opposed in the past, issues such as civil rights, school desegregation, voting rights, reproductive choice, and equal protection for all Americans, including those of a different sexual orientation.

But the John Ashcroft that I served with when he was Missouri attorney general and Governor was not at the confirmation hearing we witnessed.

I know what John Ashcroft's real record as a public servant has been because I was there. His public record shows a pattern of extremism that has deprived many children of a quality education. He squandered millions of tax dollars and harmed our State by using racially divisive political tactics.

But for now, I will take Senator Ashcroft at his word that as U.S. Attorney General, he will enforce all Federal laws vigorously, regardless of his personal views and past record.

I hope that both President Bush and former Senator Ashcroft are sincere in their intent to use the law as a healing force in this country. And to demonstrate that sincerity, I challenge the President and Senator Ashcroft to put their words into action by renominating Justice Ronnie White to the Federal bench.

Americans are still divided following a bitter election, and this current nomination process has deepened the divisions across our country. Renominating Justice White would provide a powerful act of healing. It would show the American people that the new administration is serious about bringing our Nation together.

I urge the President to take advantage of this unique opportunity and demonstrate the compassion he so frequently refers to. And I hope that former Senator Ashcroft will encourage him to do so.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) for her leadership in her efforts to inform the public with regards to the facts as to why so many of us are opposed to the appointment of Senator John Ashcroft as Attorney General of the United States.

The Attorney General heads this Nation's Department of Justice. Extremist views, which Mr. Ashcroft has demonstrated over and over again, will not serve the cause of justice.

It has been said that extremism in defense of liberties is no vice. Well,

what about extremism which comes at the expense of liberty?

I believe that the appointment of Mr. Ashcroft really does threaten the liberty of women across this country to make fundamental decisions about their health and their reproductive lives. For at least three times, for example, he stood on the floor of the Senate to vote against a woman's right to choose, even in the case of rape, incest, or even major injury to the woman.

This is, after all, a man who not only opposes abortion, he has supported legislation that would outlaw many forms of birth control.

□ 1500

We cannot go back to the days when government controlled such essential personal decisions.

We cannot have an Attorney General who so strongly opposes the law of the land which upholds a woman's right to choose. I believe that the appointment of Mr. Ashcroft threatens the liberty of minorities across this country.

In his quest for reelection, Mr. Ashcroft besmirched the reputation of a respected African American judge in order to win political points. He has pointed to the old confederacy for his heroes. We cannot go back to those days, either.

I believe that the appointment of Mr. Ashcroft endangers the rights of Americans who face discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. He opposed and sought to block the appointment of Ambassador Hormel, an openly gay and highly qualified nominee, while refusing to even meet with him. He has not only openly opposed gay rights in employment, he has reportedly trampled them himself in his own interviewing tactics. Once again, we cannot go back there. We have come too far.

President Bush has promised us bipartisan cooperation. Yet he has nominated as our Nation's chief law enforcement officer a man who publicly denounced members of his own party who champion conciliation or counsel compromise. This is a man who has really built a career on extremism, not on justice. As such, I urge my colleagues in the Senate to stand up in defense of all of our liberties and defeat Mr. Ashcroft, who will not do justice for many as the head of our Department of Justice.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KIRK). The gentlewoman will suspend.

The Chair will remind the Member that although Members may air their views concerning nominees for Cabinet posts, it is not in order to urge action on the part of the Senate or to characterize Senate action, in order to preserve comity between the two bodies.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON), the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my concern today about the nomination of Senator John Ashcroft and want to express my appreciation to the leadership of the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) to give us this opportunity to simply express our concerns.

Let me say at the outset that, on paper, Mr. Ashcroft is the perfect candidate. He was a Member of the Senate, a governor, and an attorney general of the State of Missouri. I am told that he is amiable among his friends and has a good sense of humor. However, in determining the suitability of a nominee to serve as the highest law enforcement official of the country, we must take great care and look below the surface. We must look to his record and find the truth of his character from the actions he has taken at different times. I have examined that record and believe that Mr. Ashcroft is an unfortunate choice to head the Department of Justice.

I would not make such a statement lightly. As the New York Times said in an editorial which appeared on January 23: "Any reasonable reading of the extensive Judiciary Committee testimonies shows that Mr. Ashcroft's zeal has overruled prudence in cases that bear directly on issues relevant to the Department of Justice. Mr. Ashcroft's record on civil rights marks him as out of the mainstream of American ideals."

Poll after poll has shown that the vast majority of Americans favor equal rights for all people. Most Americans take pride in the strength and courage this country has shown to come from the ugly days of segregation and Jim Crow to the America we now know. And while much remains to be done, few are willing to return to the bitter days of yesteryear. Yet it would seem that Mr. Ashcroft does not share these views because Mr. Ashcroft has opposed every major civil rights bill during his tenure in the Senate.

Not only has his opposition to civil rights involved attempting to thwart the passage of laws, but it has involved attempting to block confirmation of individuals that he thinks might carry out these laws. During the Clinton administration, he led the fight against the confirmation of Bill Lann Lee as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. Despite Mr. Lee's unquestioned and impeccable credentials, Mr. Ashcroft objected to Mr. Lee because Mr. Lee had opposed proposition 209, a California measure that eliminated affirmative action in California. Mr. Lee was never confirmed.

Even more troubling for someone who seeks to be Attorney General, Mr. Ashcroft's opposition to civil rights apparently includes blocking lawfully issued orders of Federal courts. When Mr. Ashcroft was the attorney general for Missouri, he was the State's top

lawyer in the key stages of a court battle to end separate and unequal education. Twenty-five years after *Brown v. the Board of Education*, St. Louis schools still needed to come into compliance with the Supreme Court's ruling in this landmark case. John Ashcroft blocked the parties in the suit from developing a plan for voluntary desegregation and actively obstructed implementation of court orders. He filed appeal after appeal. His efforts caused unusually harsh criticism from the courts.

After repeated delays and failure to comply by Mr. Ashcroft, the court threatened in March of 1981 to hold the State in contempt. In its order, the court order explicitly criticized the State's continual delay and failure to comply with court orders. The court stated that "the court can only draw one conclusion, the State has as a matter of deliberate policy decided to defy the authority of the court."

And again in 1981, Ashcroft even opposed a plan by the Reagan administration for voluntary desegregation. Even more troubling, in 1984, he based his gubernatorial primary campaign on his zealous opposition to the voluntary school desegregation plans for St. Louis schools. This is a troubling intersection of the use of the law for political gain.

Yet all of this could be forgiven if Mr. Ashcroft had demonstrated an ability to work with those who differed with him. In the role of Attorney General of the United States, one must meet with many people with divergent interests and complicated agendas. Yet despite all of his experience in politics and government, I am afraid that Mr. Ashcroft has not built a reputation as one who seeks compromise and understanding.

For instance, in 1993 when seeking to become chair of the Republican National Committee, members of his own party criticized Mr. Ashcroft's unwillingness to work cooperatively with those whose views differed from his. According to a quote which appeared in the St. Louis Post Dispatch on January 10, 1993, a fellow Republican from Missouri, State Senator Robert Johnson, said that Ashcroft "won't take criticism. And if you disagree with him, he knocks you out of the loop like you don't exist." And this is the most troubling thing of all, because, as Mr. William Raspberry wrote in the Washington Post, Mr. Ashcroft "seems certain to be a highly divisive force in an administration committed to healing across lines of party, ideology and race."

While I hope that the Senate takes heed to these concerns, I understand that Mr. Ashcroft may succeed in his quest to become Attorney General. Let me take this opportunity to say now that if Mr. Ashcroft is confirmed, he will have a strong obligation to staff

the Justice Department with people of demonstrated fairness and integrity and to show that they can administer the law evenhandedly. I hope that if he is confirmed, he will remember that it was his record of divisiveness that has marred his confirmation process. I hope he decides to follow President Bush's promise to be a uniter, not a divider.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK).

Ms. KILPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I say to our Member from Ohio, the distinguished judge and prosecutor, for not only leading the issue today but for her forthrightness in bringing to this body such legislative and judicial experience, prosecutorial experience that certainly has helped us, we appreciate her leadership, and I thank her very much.

Today, this afternoon or tomorrow, the United States Senate will vote on the next Attorney General. There has been much discussion about Senator Ashcroft for the last month now. Extensive hearings have been held. Much media has had its coverage. And even in this body as women in this Chamber today walked over to the Senate Chamber to stand with those opposing his nomination, we come today to a very sad time in American history. To be the top lawyer, the number one lawyer in our country requires that the person be noble, that they be intelligent, that they understand the world in which they live, and that they understand that this is a very diverse economy and country that we live in. The person should also be sensitive to the needs of the poor, the disenfranchised, and those who need a little bit more help from their government.

This is said to be the greatest country in the world. We are certainly the richest country in the world and in a position to offer more to our citizens than we offer today. The Attorney General being selected either today or tomorrow is lacking in many of the qualities that I believe are necessary in an Attorney General and the main lawyer for our country.

Forty-six years ago, *Brown v. Board of Education* was had in court and passed, a desegregation case that said open up the schools, 46 years ago, so that children could work side by side from different nationalities and partake of a quality education. *Brown v. Board of Education*. Senator Ashcroft has not only tested the rightfulness of that decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* which allowed all of America's children to receive quality education in integrated classrooms but has challenged its validity, and I think that is wrong for someone who will be the top lawyer for our country.

Roe v. Wade just celebrated over 25 years of sound judgment that this country has lived under for over 25 years. Senator Ashcroft has challenged

and tested *Roe v. Wade* on more than one occasion. It is one thing to have strong beliefs, and we all live in a great society where we can do that and express our differences, but it is quite another on the one hand to disqualify Bill Lann Lee as our civil rights expert as he did on many occasions because of his views; and here we stand today, hours away of nominating a young man who has very, very different views from many Americans, and the same barometer is not being used. There is something tragically wrong with that.

It was mentioned earlier that Ambassador Hormel was going for his hearing, asking for a hearing before the Senate so that he could be confirmed. Ambassador Hormel is a homosexual, and everyone knows that and it is all right in our country. We support that. People are what they are. God has given them the right to be that. This country validates that and not one of us because of race, religion, ethnicity or our hetero or homosexual tendencies should keep us from serving our country. It has been documented that Senator Ashcroft would not even give Ambassador Hormel a hearing. That is wrong.

So if you talk about from affirmative action to hate crimes, to access to the process through hearings so that you can be heard, Senator Ashcroft does not meet the test. He should not be confirmed as our Attorney General.

Further, Senator Ashcroft received an honorary degree from Bob Jones University, who again lost their tax status on more than one occasion because of the policies of that university. Now we have a Senator who received an honorary degree from the university, nominated and soon to be confirmed as our next Attorney General.

I think it is unfortunate that President Bush made such a volatile announcement and nomination of Senator Ashcroft at this time, at a time when we have gone through a very turbulent election, when many Americans feel that they were not treated fairly, votes were not counted, not allowed to vote, very angry, even as we speak today, that we come here today as Members of this House of Representatives, standing strong, asking the Senate to take an action that the American people would want them to take.

□ 1515

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious time. It is not too late to withdraw that nomination. To put an American citizen there who will enforce the laws and not bring their own views into the law. This country cannot afford to be fragmented much more.

This past election demonstrated that we are a great country. Those same circumstances in another country would have blood in the street. I do not advocate that. We are a country and we settle our differences, but let us not fool

each other. These are perilous times. These are critical times.

Today it was announced that the surplus is larger than ever before, even even than 6 months ago. Are we going to invest in America's schools and children and health centers and seniors? It is important that all of this be considered and that as we talk about Senator Ashcroft today and whether he will be confirmed or not, look at the views of the man. We are a greater country than that. We need people to serve who will represent all of the people.

I do not believe that Senator Ashcroft has the ability, has the sensitivity or is able to represent over half of the American citizenry.

Mr. Speaker, today we have an opportunity to say our remarks, to share with Senator Ashcroft who, I am told, will be confirmed. We hope you listen, Senator. We hope that you will enforce the laws on the books and not try to change them. We hope that you will be sensitive to civil rights issues, affirmative action, hate crimes. We hope that you will allow people hearings who come before your body so that they can be rightfully heard in this just society that we live in. I hope you are listening, Senator Ashcroft. We are going to be watching you.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COCKEY). The Chair would advise that although Members may air their views concerning nominees for Cabinet posts, it is not in order to urge action on the part of the Senate or to characterize Senate action. That is in acknowledgment of the independence of the Senate.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) has 18 minutes.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS).

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, after 3 days of confirmation hearings and a Senate Committee on the Judiciary vote, I still insist that John Ashcroft has definitely not made his case for appointment as U.S. Attorney General. Instead, Congress and the public have witnessed a confirmation strategy that consists of misleading characterizations, factual errors and evasion.

When convenient during his confirmation hearings, Mr. Ashcroft has feigned memory loss as he did in response to inquiries regarding his opposition to Judge Margaret McKeown. Yet in a 1997 speech before The Heritage Foundation, he referred to her efforts in a lawful ballot initiative campaign as sinister and labeled her and her ACLU friends as liberal elitists.

When pressed for answers to persistent inquiries, Mr. Ashcroft deferred to a need for consultation with Department of Justice officials, as in his re-

sponse regarding enforcement of Attorney General Reno's prohibition of inquiries into the sexual orientation of department employees.

Another tactic used by Mr. Ashcroft when the questions made him uncomfortable was to reply, quote, "I do not think I want to discuss that any longer," quote/unquote.

We saw that tactic when he was questioned on his opposition to the appointment of Ambassador Hormel, the ambassador to Luxembourg, who was subsequently confirmed by an 80 to 11 vote in the Senate. Ambassador Hormel's appointment was made while the Senate was in recess due in great part to Mr. Ashcroft's opposition to the ambassador's, quote, "life-style," quote/unquote.

Mr. Ashcroft said in 1998 during the confirmation process that Ambassador Hormel, quote, "has been a leader in promoting a life-style likely to be offensive in the setting to which he will be assigned," quote/unquote.

Mr. Ashcroft made the observations, even though Ambassador Hormel had received bipartisan support, endorsement by then Secretary of State George Schultz, and the government of Luxembourg.

Under questioning during the recent hearings, Mr. Ashcroft remarked easily that he was, quote, "not prepared to re-debate that nomination," quote/unquote.

Then there is the, quote, just trust me John Ashcroft, who asks us to believe that he can be new, but only if he is confirmed. We saw this tactic in all of his responses to questions concerning a woman's right to choose. The fact is that in matters of a woman's right to choose, freedom of choice, Mr. Ashcroft has exhibited a zealous opposition to *Roe v. Wade* while a State and Federal official. In spite of his career-long attempt to overturn *Roe*, he has stated without credibility during the hearings that the *Roe* decision is the settled law of the land, which he will enforce. We cannot and should not expect John Ashcroft to retreat in his persistent campaign against a woman's right to reproductive options.

Mr. Ashcroft has said he is a man of principle. Let us take a look at a few more of his principles in action. As Missouri's attorney general and governor, Mr. Ashcroft vigorously opposed voluntary desegregation plans submitted by St. Louis city and county school districts. When those plans were subsequently approved and ordered by the Federal district court, Mr. Ashcroft continued in his opposition, arguing that the Court could not implement an intradistrict remedy, although voluntary, for an intradistrict violation.

In at least three appeals, the Supreme Court rejected Mr. Ashcroft's argument as often as he made it, agreeing with the lower courts that the State was the primary constitutional

violator. The appeals court also referred to Missouri's history of school segregation and reminded Mr. Ashcroft that in the past in order to ensure educational apartheid, the State bused suburban black students from St. Louis County into the city's black schools in order to maintain the dual system.

Ironically, a statutorily mandated intradistrict scheme to maintain segregation was acceptable for years while a voluntary intradistrict attempt to eliminate segregation was declared too costly and disruptive by Mr. Ashcroft and school desegregation opponents.

Remaining among the most vicious misrepresentations associated with the consideration of Mr. Ashcroft for confirmation is his wholly unethical campaign against Judge Ronnie White. The record cannot overemphasize the fact that after receiving bipartisan support for a Federal judgeship, support that included Missouri Senator BOND, John Ashcroft sabotaged Judge White's confirmation after the hearings, the committee hearings, at a time when Judge White could not respond to Mr. Ashcroft's distortions of his record.

Judge White's record on capital punishment did not differ appreciably from that of any other jurists who were successfully confirmed with Mr. Ashcroft's consent and support. In the case of Judge White, deliberate misrepresentation, cowardly sabotage, and a double standard were all instruments in Mr. Ashcroft's drive to promote his own reelection.

These are a few of the principles that have in practice guided Mr. Ashcroft's actions. These are the principles that speak more loudly than any confirmation hearing denials. Questions regarding Mr. Ashcroft's record and his fitness to serve as the Nation's top prosecutor have not been answered satisfactorily. Accordingly, the Nation should not suffer the appointment of Mr. Ashcroft as Attorney General. He has demonstrated over and over again that he is unwilling to travel a path forward to needed social progress. As guardians of the Nation's future, we cannot sit idly by and watch Mr. Ashcroft be confirmed without strong opposition, and while we have been encouraged and urged not to advocate what should be done about him by the Members, I just hope and I just pray that the Members do the right thing. I do not need to tell them what to do. He has defined himself very well. I think they know what to do. He should not be confirmed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this special order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

POINTS OF ORDER

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, because of some misunderstanding, I would make a point of order and ask unanimous consent to have the time extended to allow the people who I have remaining to speak. Can I do that?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The request of the gentleman from Ohio may not be entertained.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. May I inquire of the Speaker why?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under clause 2 of rule XVII, a Member may not address the House for longer than 1 hour.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. This is a point of order. I hope I am not using up my time. Up until one speaker, before this speaker, the speaker was acting on the time; and it was my thought that that was how the time operated, sir; and so I wanted to be able to get some additional time to allow the rest of the people I have here to speak, especially on an issue as important as this confirmation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair regrets any misunderstanding, but here is the practice: A Member who is recognized to control time during special orders may yield to colleagues for such amounts of time as she may deem appropriate, but may not yield blocks of time to be enforced by the Chair. Members regulate the duration of their yielding by reclaiming the time when appropriate.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes under Special Orders.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman may take that Special Order after the pending time has expired.

There was no objection.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague, the gentleman from the great State of Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank very much the distinguished gentleman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES), and I thank her for her leadership on this issue.

I thank my colleagues for coming to the floor of this House at a time when it might be more comfortable for us to just drift off into the distant sunset, but I am always reminded that it is not the test of character where one stands in times of comfort and ease but where one stands in times of battle and challenge. Though there may be no other voices that raise up against the confirmation of the Attorney General of the United States, I am proud to stand with those who would speak for the voiceless in America, for there are millions of Americans whose voices will not be heard when the vote is taken and there is such a confirmation.

My colleagues have chronicled the record and philosophy of this nominee, but the real question becomes to answer the question for America and for this body. What is the value and the importance of the Attorney General and the Department of Justice? It is not a question of whether we are recklessly opposing someone because they have fundamentally different beliefs than what I have, but the Department of Justice is what it symbolizes. It is the refuge for the voiceless and the disenfranchised.

In the 1960s, in the civil rights movement, as Martin Luther King, Jr., in the segregated South, it was the Justice Department that came riding in to preserve the sanctity of the Union, and for us to be able to express the opposition to a segregated and violent America.

It was the Justice Department and the President of the United States that utilized that leadership when it was necessary for the Little Rock 9 to enter into the high schools so that there could be integration and an implementation of Brown v. Topeka in the case that was before the Supreme Court. And so the Justice Department is the refuge and the Attorney General is the captain.

If this nominee is confirmed, that captain will steer the ship wrong. There will be no refuge for women who under the law have the right to utilize Roe v. Wade. There will be no refuge for those of us who pushed for desegregation of this Nation. There will be no refuge for millions of Americans who were disenfranchised in the last election and question whether or not there is support for voting and enforcing the Voter Rights Act of 1965.

Then there will be the question of appointments, the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, the protection and understanding of the rights of immigrants, respect for secret evidence, a law that was passed, realizing that immigrants have rights and that we should not be in a position in this Nation to bash people because they are different. We can all join in in believing that there should be law and order; but at the same time who will enforce the rights not only of the victim, which I support, in supporting their rights, but the innocent convicted defendant incarcerated, the wrong person, when we talk about using DNA?

□ 1530

What will be the position of this Attorney General when all of his legal background and his public service have been in opposition to this?

If I might just say this: I sat through the hearings and I testified with respect to my opposition to this nomination. I cannot suggest to the other body what they should do. I can only plead with them on behalf of those whose voices will not be heard that if

there is one place in this country where those who are less than what many would want them to be, who are poor, who are downtrodden, who are incarcerated, who seek to have laws enforced, if there is anyplace that one can go and seek fairness, it has to be in the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, I close with these two points of contention. In those hearings, Attorney General-to-be or nominee Ashcroft was asked if he followed the law as the Attorney General in Missouri, not whether or not he believed or had a philosophy different from any one of us, and, of course, he suggested that he did follow the law. But yet, during the bitter 10-year legal battle against voluntary desegregation, and I said voluntary, where the community came together, he was cited by the Federal court and he was criticized, and the language is as follows: his continual delay and failure to comply with court orders, and concluded that the State has, as a matter of deliberate policy, decided to defy the authority of a court. That is who my Republican colleagues think can follow the law.

Lastly, when he was asked whether or not he opposed Judge Ronnie White for any other reason, he noted that he did not derogate his background, but yet Ashcroft, in opposing him, indicated that White, a judge that had voted 60 percent with the Ashcroft appointees of the State, would use his lifetime appointment to push law in a pro-criminal direction, consistent with his own political agenda. When have we ever heard that the courts and the judges who take an oath of office have done so?

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for allowing me to join in with my colleagues. The real question is, will we close the doors of justice with the confirmation of an individual who has seemingly exemplified whatever his beliefs are, questionable vigorosity in enforcing the law of the land? Be not afraid to stand up and to suggest that there should be another direction for this Nation. I have no fear, and I hope the rest of America has none as well.

Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to oppose the nomination of John Ashcroft for Attorney General of the United States. Today, I walked in solidarity with fellow women members of the Democratic Caucus to the Senate floor to oppose the Ashcroft confirmation. At least fifteen Members of the Democratic Women's Caucus participated in this solemn protest concerning the confirmation battle. We came together and witnessed the debate in the Senate Chamber up close and personal.

I am here today to speak out not only as a Member of Congress, but as a citizen of our diverse and vulnerable nation.

The Senate is moving perilously close to taking final action on Mr. Ashcroft's confirmation. This causes me great anxiety in light of the fact that a growing number of Americans are demonstrating in every state of the Union against the Ashcroft confirmation.

Based on Mr. John Ashcroft's voting record of aggressive opposition to women's rights, civil rights, and the unfortunate handling of the nomination of Judge Ronnie White, the Senate Judiciary Committee and its colleagues should vote down his nomination for the sake of unifying America. The Attorney General for the United States should support laws that protect all of America's people. It is unfortunate that ratings by the Christian Coalition, the National Right to Life Committee, and the American Conservative Union show that throughout his 6 years in the U.S. Senate, John Ashcroft has been a consistent and reliable vote in opposing the certified law of the land. I am not questioning Mr. Ashcroft's personal probity; I am vigorously questioning his suitability for the job for which he has been selected.

Mr. Ashcroft's record on matters of race has been simply disappointing. According to the Washington Times, Ashcroft received a grade of "F" on each of the last three NAACP report cards because of his anti-progressive voting record, having voted to approve only 3 of 15 legislative issues supported by the NAACP and other civil rights groups. This explains why such a broad number of groups are so strongly united against his confirmation as the next Attorney General of the United States.

Mr. Ashcroft opposed the approval of Judge Ronnie White to the Federal Bench. In 1997, President Clinton nominated Judge White of the Missouri Supreme Court to be a United States District Court Judge. At the hearings on his nomination in May 1998, Judge White was introduced to the Senate Judiciary Committee by Republican Senator CHRISTOPHER BOND, who told the committee that Judge White "has the necessary qualifications and character traits which are required for this most important job." See Confirmation Hearings on Federal Appointments: Hearings Before the Senn. Comm. On the Judiciary, 15th Cong., 2d Sess. 7-8 (1998).

We all know that John Ashcroft led a campaign to defeat the nomination of Missouri's first African-American Supreme Court Justice, Judge Ronnie White, to the federal bench. Mr. Ashcroft seriously distorted White's record, portraying it as pro criminal, and anti-death penalty, and even suggested, according to the London Guardian, that "the judge had shown a tremendous bent toward criminal activity." Ironically, Judge White had voted to uphold the death sentence in 41 of the 59 cases that came before him, roughly the same proportion as Ashcroft's court appointees when he was Governor.

In fact, of these 59 death penalty cases, Judge White was the sole dissenter in only three of them. As a matter of fact, three of the other Missouri Supreme Court judges, all of whom were appointed by Mr. Ashcroft as Governor, voted to reverse death penalty case sentences in greater percentage of cases than did Judge White. Ashcroft also failed to consider or mention that in at least fifteen death penalty cases Missouri Supreme Court Justice, Ronnie White, wrote the majority opinion for the court to uphold the death sentence. America owes an apology to Judge White and I admire his ability to move forward with his life. This is a judicial nominee for which Mr. Ashcroft had no substantial reason to oppose—and it is time that America knows the facts.

I took my responsibility in helping shed light on Judge White's confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on the 17th of January of this month with great seriousness. I felt compelled to have my voice heard on behalf of Judge White who had never been given the chance to defend himself from vicious attacks on his impeccable judicial record. More importantly, each Senator and Representative now knows that when Judge White's nomination was brought to the Senate floor in October 1999, Senator Ashcroft spearheaded a successful party-line fight to defeat White's confirmation, the first time in 12 years (since the vote on Robert Bork) that the full Senate had voted to reject a nominee to the Federal bench.

In contrast to that effort, as former Congressman William L. Clay introduced Judge Ronnie White before the Senate Judiciary Committee he said the following: "I might cite one incident that attests to the kind of relationship that Judge White has with many, and that is with a member of this committee—Senator Ashcroft. When I recommended Judge White to the President for nomination and the President nominated him, one of the first people that I conferred with was Senator Ashcroft. At a later date, he told me that he had appointed six of the seven members to the Missouri Supreme Court. Ronnie White was the only one he had not appointed. He said he had canvassed the other six, the ones that he appointed, and they all spoke very highly of Ronnie White and suggested that he would make an outstanding Federal Judge. So I think that this is the kind of person we need on the Federal bench." Confirmation Hearings on Federal Appointments: Hearings before the Sen. Comm. On the Judiciary, 105th Cong., 2d Sess. 7-8 (1998).

John Ashcroft, if confirmed would not be a guardian of women's right to reproductive choice as provided by the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. On the contrary, Mr. Ashcroft supports a constitutional amendment that would outlaw abortion even in cases of incest and rape and that would criminalize several commonly used forms of contraception.

As Missouri attorney general and Governor, and more recently in the Senate, he repeatedly used his office as a U.S. Senator to push through severe new restrictions on women's reproductive freedom as part of an effort to get the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*. It is fair to say that many women in America have a right to be concerned because as Attorney General, Ashcroft could use the power the Federal Government behind new strategies to defeat the right to an abortion in the Supreme Court. It is also reasonable to express doubts about whether he would fully enforce laws that insure access to abortion clinics by limiting violent or obstructive demonstrations by abortion opponents.

We all look at the Attorney General to ensure even-handed law enforcement and protection of our basic constitutional rights: freedom of speech, the right to privacy, a woman's right to choose, freedom from governmental oppression and other vital functions. We cannot deny the Attorney General plays a critical role in bringing the country together, bridging racial divides, and inspiring people's confidence in their government.

Accordingly, as I review the series of questionable acts that can be found in Mr. Ashcroft's record as a public servant, I find such action by Mr. Ashcroft to be inconsistent with the kind of vision and tolerance that the next top law enforcement officer will need to exhibit. Mr. Ashcroft's record on desegregation in the State of Missouri is one of those examples that makes me truly sad as an African-American and I have an obligation to emphasize this very grave matter.

John Ashcroft, as Attorney General and as Governor of the State of Missouri consistently opposed efforts to desegregate schools in Missouri, which for more than 150 years, had legally sanctioned separate and inferior education for blacks.

Missouri has a long and marked history of systematically discriminating against African-Americans in the provision of public education. During the years of slavery, the State forbid the education of blacks. After the Civil War, Missouri was the most northern state to have a constitutional mandate requiring separate schools for blacks and whites. This constitutional provision remained in place until 1976. For much of its history, Missouri provided vastly inferior services to black students.

After the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Missouri Attorney General's office, rather than ordering the dismantling of segregation, simply issued an opinion stating that local districts "may permit" white and colored children to attend the same schools, and could decide for themselves whether they must integrate. Local school districts in St. Louis and Kansas City perpetuated segregation by manipulating attendance boundaries, drawing discriminatory busing plans and building new schools in places to keep races apart.

The now well-known St. Louis case, which was debated in these proceedings before the Senate Judiciary Committee, was filed in 1972. In brief, St. Louis had adhered to an explicit system of racial segregation throughout the 1960s. White students were assigned to schools in their neighborhood; black students attended black schools in the core of the city. Black students who resided outside the city were bused into the black schools in the city. The city had launched no effort to integrate; it simply adopted neighborhood school assignment plans that maintained racial segregation.

Senator Ashcroft, then the Attorney General, challenged the desegregation plan. He argued that there was no basis for holding the State liable and that the State had taken the "necessary and appropriate steps to remove the legal underpinnings of segregated schooling as well as affirmatively prohibiting such discrimination." The courts rejected his attempts; even the U.S. Supreme Court denied certiorari.

In 1983, the city school Board and the 22 suburban districts all agreed to a "unique and compressive" settlement, implementing a voluntary 5-year school desegregation plan for both the city and the county. Importantly, the plan was voluntary—it relied on voluntary transfers by students rather than so-called "forced busing." The district court approved this plan.

Attorney General Ashcroft, representing the State, was the only one that did not join the

settlement. He opposed all aspects of the settlement. In fact, he sought to have it overturned by the Eighth Circuit. The Eighth Circuit upheld most of the provisions of the plan, and emphasized that three times over the prior three years, specifically held that the State was the primary constitutional violator. Can this man be the next Attorney General of the United States of America.

We need a nominee that enforces the civil rights laws of the Nation, that brings strength and confidence to the top law enforcement post of our great country, and to affirm equal protection and fundamental fairness in the United States of America. We owe at least that much to the working people of America and all those who believe the United States remains an example of basic fairness and justice for all.

I strongly believe that some of the beliefs of Senator John Ashcroft are archaic and obsolete. This country has come so far in improving civil rights and fundamental fairness. The confirmation of John Ashcroft will set us years back after all the improvements that have been made. This would be a travesty.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time, and I commend her for calling this Special Order.

I too rise to express my opposition to the nomination of former Senator John Ashcroft, a man who has spoken repeatedly against gun control, against a woman's right to choose, against affirmative action, against integration of schools, against the Miranda rights of suspects. How can we have this person, as our President wants to nominate and has nominated, and who opposes a qualified person like Bill Lan Lee, who said that even though you are great and I hear what you say, I just do not believe you can do what you say; against Frederica Massiah-Jackson for Federal judgeship; against Dr. David Satcher, one of the tremendous physicians in this country for Surgeon General; against Dr. Foster, another candidate for Surgeon General; against Ronnie White, who, in 71 percent of the cases voted for the death penalty, where Mr. Ashcroft voted for another person who only voted for the death penalty 55 percent, who happened not to be African American.

Finally, when a person said that receiving a doctorate degree, honorary doctorate degree from Bob Jones University, that after he swore he was telling the truth, and when he looked into that camera, when he was asked about that university, Senator Ashcroft sat in that seat and said, in 1999, in June of 1999, that I did not know what Bob Jones University stood for, when George Bush went there to campaign and McCain went there to campaign, and the whole question of when President Bush apologized to the Catholics because he said that he should not have gone there because they are

antiCatholic, and never said a word about the antiblack. But that was our new President that wants to bring all people in. I just cannot understand how Senator Ashcroft could put his hand on the Bible, put his hand up to God and say, I did not know, less than a year ago, what Bob Jones University stood for.

Mr. Speaker, for those reasons, I do not think he is qualified to be the Attorney General of the United States of America.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Speaker for the additional 1 minute. In light of our discussion, very quickly, the relief for the minorities over the years have come through the courts. This year, we were let down by the United States Supreme Court in their decision that ultimately decided the election that allowed President Bush to become President. We were then let down by the executive, the President, by nominating John Ashcroft to be Attorney General. We need the legislature, even though we cannot urge them to vote in any way; the Senate, the only remaining branch of government who has not yet acted, to stand up for Americans, stand up for minorities, stand up for women, stand up for gays and lesbians, and stand up for all Americans, and not confirm the nomination of John Ashcroft.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). The Chair urges all Members not to urge action of Members of the Senate.

OPPOSING ATTORNEY GENERAL NOMINATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, as the ranking Democrat on the House Committee on the Judiciary and the senior Member of the Congressional Black Caucus, I am unalterably opposed to John Ashcroft's nomination to be Attorney General of the United States. I have reached this decision with some regret and consternation. In my 36 years in Congress, I have never publicly opposed a nominee for Attorney General. However, in the present case, my reservations about the Senator's ability and inclinations to support and uphold the law in such critical areas as civil rights, reproductive choice and gun safety are so grave; and his pattern of misleading and disingenuous responses at his confirmation hearings so serious, that I believe it is in the national interests that his nomination be either withdrawn or rejected by the Senate.

I am also concerned that the Senator's personal lack of responsiveness